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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

NND 969645
By STJ/K Date 7/30/98



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Department of State

TELEGRAM

Pol 23-9 Uganda

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ACTION: Amembassy LONDON PRIORITY
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INFO: Amembassy ADDIS ABABA
Amembassy DAR ES SALAAM
Amembassy KAMPALA
Amembassy NAIROBI

GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR FERGUSON

LIMDIS

SUBJECT: Uganda Coup

1. USG is seriously concerned about disruptive effect which coup in Uganda may have in what has been one of most stable areas in Africa, with resultant sharp decline in favorable attitudes which currently exist in this country and elsewhere towards East Africa.

US and especially UK have strong ties in area - cultural, educational, commercial, political - and number American tourists and businessmen traveling to area has steadily risen in recent years. Continued turmoil in East Africa will inevitably lead to sharp drop in tourism and growing reluctance of private firms to invest in

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CLEARANCES:

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EUR/BMI - Mr. Burns (draft)

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area. Obviously such developments could have highly unfavorable effect in economic development and progress of area.

2. In view above, Dept would like Embassy to explore with HMG whether any initiative might usefully be taken to avert further ~~deterioration.~~ deterioration. Request Embassy seek appointment (s) with appropriate FCO officials per Carter/Walker telecon ASAP. We have asked Amb. Ferguson, who currently in Geneva, to go to London to participate with Embassy representative in these discussions.

3. In addition to obtaining general FCO reaction re developments in Uganda and neighboring East African countries to date, you should raise following specific points:

a) Utility of high-level person acceptable to both sides, preferably African leader (perhaps Kenyatta or other Kenyan) but possibly UK national of stature of Malcolm MacDonald, mediating between Obote and Amin

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with aim of finding solution acceptable to both sides. Realize chances of success probably very slight but believe worth trying if suitable mediator can be found. Obote and Amin have had close relationship in past and Amin has publicly stated Obote is welcome to return to Uganda but not as President. Also said in first press conference Obote not a bad man but misled by people he trusted.

b) UK assessment of effect of coup and Obote's continued presence in Tanzania on future relations among three East African states, and particularly on East African Community.

c) In connection above point, desirability of British discussing entire problem with Kenyans to see what action they might be willing to take with both Tanzania and Uganda (Obote and/or Amin) to assure continuation of effective East African Community and other regional institutions. We assume GOK attaches

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considerable importance to holding such institutions together.

d) UK assessment of Amin's support and ability to hold out.

e) Any additional thoughts or information re recognition question.

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END

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